

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
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AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 0692

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, SP
SUBJECT: SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER COMMENTS ON CURRENT SITUATION

1. DURING THE COURSE OF A LUNCHEON JANUARY 27 (HELD AT HIS SUGGESTION) WITH THE BRITISH, WEST GERMAN AND U.S. LABOR ATTACHES, SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER ENRIQUE DE LA MATA COMMENTED ON BOTH THE CURRENT TENSE INTERNAL SITUATION AND LABOR MATTERS. THE HIGHLIGHTS ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW.

2. INTERNAL TROUBLES. MANY WERE ASKING WHY THE GOVT HAD CHOSEN NOT TO ATTEND THE JANUARY 26 FUNERAL SERVICES OF THE MURDERED COMMUNIST LABOR LAWYERS (MADRID 656). THE
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GOVT, HE SAID, THOUGHT IT BEST NOT TO RISK A POSSIBLE ANTI-GOVERNMENT INCIDENT AT A TIME WHEN EMOTIONS WERE RUNNING HIGH. THE FACT THAT PCE SECRETARY GENERAL SANTIAGO CARRILLO PLAYED A PROMINENT ROLE ALSO DETERRED GOVT PARTICIPATION. DE LA MATA LAUDED THE "INTELLIGENT AND UNDERSTANDING" ATTITUDE TAKEN BY OPPOSITION POLITICAL AND LABOR ELEMENTS IN CALLING FOR PEACEFUL AND MODERATE

REACTIONS TO THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS. THE SPANISH POLITICAL SCENE HAD DEVELOPED FROM ONE Pitting FRANCOISTS AGAINST ANTI-FRANCOISTS, TO ONE WHERE MEN OF GOOD WILL ON BOTH SIDES COULD COOPERATE IN BRINGING ABOUT DEMOCRATIZATION. UNLESS OTHER KILLINGS OCCUR, (WHICH WE NOTE COULD HAPPEN) THESE TRAGIC EVENTS MAY COME TO BE SEEN AS SHOWING THAT EXTREMIST TERRORIST GROUPS FROM EITHER LEFT OR RIGHT ARE NOT ABLE TO SABOTAGE THE MARCH TOWARD DEMOCRACY. DE LA MATA ALSO PAID TRIBUTE TO THE CALM REACTION OF THE MILITARY.

3. ILO VISIT. DE LA MATA DECLARED THAT HIS JANUARY 25 MEETING WITH ILO SEC GEN BLANCHARD (MADRID 411) IN GENEVA HAD GONE "SPLENDIDLY," AND THAT THE PROPOSED SPANISH LABOR REFORM BILL HAD MET WITH THE ILO'S GENERAL APPROVAL. ONLY BECAUSE IT WAS STILL A VERY SENSITIVE ISSUE IN SPAIN, HAD DE LA MATA REGRETFULLY DECLINED AN ILO OFFER TO ISSUE A COMPLIMENTARY STATEMENT ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF SPANISH LABOR REFORM - SIMILAR TO THE FAVORABLE STATEMENT ABOUT SPANISH POLITICAL REFORM ISSUED RECENTLY BY VISITING EUROPEAN COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES. (WE NOTE THAT OTHER OBSERVERS IN GENEVA HAVE CONFIRMED TO US THAT BLANCHARD WAS ALSO SATISFIED WITH HIS MEETING WITH THE SPANISH MINISTER).

4. TRADE UNIONISM. DE LA MATA SAID THAT HE NO LONGER WISHED TO BE CONSIDERED AS THE MINISTER WHO HEADED THE VERTICAL SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION (SSO), BUT AS THE MINISTER OF TRADE UNIONISM IN A MUCH BROADER SENSE. THE GOVT DID NOT WANT A PROLIFERATION OF TRADE UNIONS, BUT RATHER HOPED THAT THE PRESENT OPPOSITION UNIONS (HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED

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THE SOCIALIST UGT, THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST USO, AND THE COMMUNIST WORKERS' COMMISSIONS) WOULD RAPIDLY DEVELOP INTO RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS PREPARED TO PLAY RESPONSIBLE ROLES IN LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE SAW ANY LIKELIHOOD OF AN IMPORTANT CENTER-ORIENTED LABOR MOVEMENT DEVELOPING, HE ANSWERED IN THE NEGATIVE. HE OFFERED THE OPINION THAT SPANISH EMPLOYERS WERE CURRENTLY VERY DISORGANIZED AND NOT WELL-PREPARED FOR THE FREE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TO COME. WITH RESPECT TO THE TOUCHY ISSUE OF THE EVENTUAL DISPOSITION OF SSO PATRIMONY, HE SAID HE EXPECTED THIS TO BE EVENTUALLY RESOLVED THROUGH TRIPARTITE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN LABOR, MANAGEMENT, AND GOVT. FINALLY, DE LA MATA EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR BRITISH, GERMAN, AND AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING AND ASSISTANCE IN SUPPORTING THE SUAREZ GOVT'S "UNEQUIVOCAL COMMITMENT FREE TRADE UNIONISM." STABLER

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